

Member Antoine Ghanem of Lebanon, who was assassinated on September 19.

Statement on Senator Pete V. Domenici's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

October 4, 2007

For over three decades, the citizens of New Mexico have turned to Pete Domenici for leadership on issues that matter to their families, their communities, and their country. He earned the respect and trust of his constituents, which is why they elected him to serve in the United States Senate longer than any other New Mexican in history.

A proud son of Italian immigrants, Pete has devoted much of his life to serving the State and the country that he loves. In Washington, he has won the respect of his peers as a skilled and determined legislator. He championed clean nuclear power and helped secure the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the first national energy plan in more than a decade. As

chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, he was a leader in efforts to lower taxes, balance the budget, and reduce Washington spending. And he has been a tireless advocate for our men and women in uniform. Senator Domenici has helped improve the lives of millions of Americans and made our country safer.

Pete is a man of intellect and compassion. I have valued his counsel and friendship, and I look forward to working with him as he serves out the remainder of his term.

Laura and I are grateful for Pete's service to our Nation. As he nears retirement, we pray for his health and well-being, and we send Pete, his wife, Nancy, and their family our best wishes.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Legislation

October 4, 2007

In August, I proposed a comprehensive plan to help homeowners avoid foreclosures and stay in their homes. As part of this plan, I pledged to work with Congress in a bipartisan way to temporarily reform a provision of the Federal Tax Code to make it easier for homeowners to refinance their mortgages during this time of market stress.

Today a bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives passed legislation to help people stay in their homes and move this process forward. I applaud the House's efforts. I urge the Senate to swiftly consider this legislation and make it temporary.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 3648.

Remarks at the Iftaar Dinner October 4, 2007

Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. *Ramadan Mubarak*. Laura and I are pleased to have you here for our seventh Iftaar dinner. Tonight we celebrate traditions of Islamic faith, which brings hope and comfort to more than a billion people. For Muslims around the world, the holy month of Ramadan is a special time of prayer and fasting. It is a time for charity and service to those less fortunate. It's a time to celebrate Islam's learned and vibrant culture, which has enriched civilization for centuries.

Ramadan is also a good time for Americans of all faiths to reflect on the values we hold in common, including love of family, gratitude to the Almighty, devotion to community, and a commitment to religious liberty. The freedom of worship is central to the American character. It's the first protection in the Bill of Rights. It holds together the fabric of American society, supporting every individual's right to practice his or her beliefs without fear.

Today, our world is at war with violent extremists who seek to tear the fabric of our society and stop the advance of freedom in Muslim societies around the world. They attack holy sites, destroy mosques and minarets, and kill innocent men, women, and children, including Muslims who do not share their radical views. They believe that by spreading chaos and violence they can frustrate the desire of Muslims to live in freedom and peace. We say to them, you don't represent Muslims, you do not represent Islam, and you will not succeed.

America is standing with mainstream citizens across the broader Middle East. We stand with nearly 12 million Iraqis who voted for a democratic future for their children. We're standing with Afghan people as they defend their young democracy against the Taliban and Al Qaida. We're

standing with the Lebanese people, who raised the banner of a Cedar Revolution to reclaim their freedom and independence. We're standing with all who seek the blessings of liberty and the peace that freedom brings.

Americans have a history of standing with Muslims facing suffering and hardship, and it's a proud history. Our country defended Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo after the breakup of Yugoslavia. We supported Kuwait after it was invaded by Saddam Hussein. Americans came to the aid of victims of devastating earthquakes in Pakistan, India, and Iran. Americans responded with urgency and compassion to the wreckage of the tsunami in Indonesia and Sri Lanka and Thailand. We're rallying the world to confront the genocide in Sudan and deliver humanitarian aid for those in dire need. And we support the establishment of a Palestinian democracy to live side by side with Israel in peace.

As you break your Ramadan fast at this Iftaar dinner, let us renew our faith in the universality of freedom. Let us celebrate the millions of Muslims that we are proud to call American citizens. And let us honor the many Muslim nations that America is proud to call friends.

Laura and I are grateful you're here. Thank you for coming. We wish you a blessed Ramadan. And now I ask the Imam to say the blessing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:16 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Cmdr. Abuhena M. Saifulislam, USN, Navy Chaplain Corps.